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EXCERPTS FROM REPORTS OF A. L. A. WORKERS OVERSEAS

THE HEADQUARTERS LIBRARY

The work of the headquarters library in France can hardly be measured by library standards in the United States because its organization and purpose are unique. It sprang into existence to meet a certain need and has molded its life towards this end. Its purpose has been to provide a comfortable place where the American soldier can enjoy the help and inspiration of books, and to send him home with a wider knowledge of European conditions and better equipped for his business or profession than when he left the United States. Conditions in a foreign city are so different from those in America and the problems encountered so varied that the structure of library science has often had to be bent and twisted to meet the special needs.

The home of the headquarters library is at 10, Rue de l'Élysée, Paris, in the palace of the former papal legate. The broad hallway of this building gives an excellent place for the charging desk, and the big reception rooms opening from each side have been converted into reference and reading rooms. In spite of the walls frescoed with cupids and the big mirrors, the place quickly assumed an American appearance, as was evidenced by the boy from a Missouri farm who paused at the door with a beaming face, exclaiming, "Gee, this looks just like home."

A "real bit of America" in France, others called it and it was indeed our aim to have the American spirit so strong that it would catch and hold our soldiers.

The headquarters library opened on August 29 after one hectic month in which seven thousand books were classified, listed and prepared for circulation by less than half a dozen people. One Decimal classification was our sole library guide and when that was requisitioned a little later by the Army headquarters, we had only our memories to depend on.

The building itself was a constant surprise to us. It was like living in an enchanted palace. Every few days some unexpected new phase would open up. The papal legate's oven formed an excellent place for filing newspapers, his big iron stoves were converted into tables for sorting books, and just when we did not know which way to turn to find a place to store our surplus stocks until we could get into shape for circulation, we would stumble upon some secret passage or concealed stairway leading into a spacious wine

closet which could easily be converted into a storeroom.

It was astonishing how quickly the soldiers discovered that there was an American Library in Paris. Word was passed from one to another that there was a place where American books and magazines could be had for the asking, and often at night we marveled at the well-filled reading rooms when we realized that not even a line of light marked the existence of the library building and that the streets leading to it were so black that one could only feel his way along. Once we tried to place a guiding star over the door in the shape of an electric bulb covered with many coats of dark paint. But the next morning one of the police officers visited the library and ordered it to be instantly removed. "You are endangering the whole city," he told us. "The enemy airplanes might see your light and would know that Paris lay below." So we put aside our electric globe and hung heavy curtains over our windows that we might in no way be to blame for the bombs that almost nightly dropped on Paris.

At this time when the American Army was pounding on the western front and every nerve was strained toward the winning of the war, the chief interest of the soldiers in books lay along technical lines. Daily the shelves were stripped of books on mechanical engineering, and daily new copies were added. Books dealing with airplanes, automobiles, telegraphy, and road construction were consumed with remarkable rapidity and supplemented by mathematics varying from simple questions in arithmetic to the more intricate problems of calculus.

Then came the signing of the armistice and in a day the demand for technical subjects stopped and that for fiction trebled. "Something light and foolish" was the constant demand. The tension had been loosened and the library was the first to feel it.

"It is just the reaction," we told ourselves. "The men will soon turn again to serious reading;" but the days passed and our books on art, history, travel and poetry stood unused upon our shelves, while the demand for worthless fiction continually increased. Moreover the quality of the reading was reflected in the faces of the men. They were unhappy, discontented and restless. The war was over and they wanted to go home. They could see no beauty in Paris and they

were losing the great historical significance of the place.

This was the library's opportunity, and it was quickly seized. Our staff was small; we were working nights, Sundays and holidays; but it was our privilege to have a big share in strengthening the morale of our soldiers. It would be months before our army could be sent across the ocean and it was for us to make the soldiers realize that this was not lost time but a glorious opportunity and a rare chance for preparation for the future. Gay, modern Paris had failed to satisfy them and it was our duty to interest them in its historical background and its architectural beauty; to send them home with a knowledge of the real spirit of France and to awaken a deeper interest in civic improvement as reflected in art and architecture of Paris.

It was not an easy problem to catch and hold the interest of these restless, homesick men, but we strained every effort tactfully to turn the current of public reading. We filled a table near the entrance with alluring books dealing with France—its history, travel and biography. We filled a bulletin board in the hall on which we posted notices of interesting lectures and the times of the opening of museums and art galleries. We distributed printed lists of interesting books on France, Paris and French art.

Gradually the morale stiffened. Soldiers who had walked through the streets of Paris with unseeing eyes awakened to the knowledge that there was something more than cafés and vaudeville. Books on France were swept from the shelves, over a hundred guides to Paris by Baedeker were in constant circulation and fifty copies of Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables" did not begin to fill the demand. Three hundred copies of French history were added to the collection and still the shelves were empty. The requests for books on art and architecture increased and the most encouraging part of the work was that the demand came from the masses.

"The simplest books you have on French architecture," demanded one man. "I'm a contractor; my buildings are strong but they are ugly. These Parisians have something that we haven't and I am going to find out what it is. When I go back to America, I want to put up good-looking buildings as well as strong ones."

Gradually the discontented faces grew less frequent; the restlessness was less apparent and it became evident that the

time required for waiting for passage home was not to be lost.

Thus there have been three stages of reading in the headquarters library: First the technical, then the fiction and now we are passing through the educational.

In February the great influx of American students began at the Sorbonne. Two thousand were admitted to this university and during the first week practically all found their way to the headquarters library.

"I haven't seen an English book for a year," one soldier confessed. "So I think I'll have to begin on something light and take the heavy stuff when my mind becomes used to the strain."

While the Sorbonne students were requesting books on literature and art, there came an overwhelming demand for international law, economic geography and European history. Our shelves were stripped and every available copy brought in from the warehouse. Soldiers were waiting on the steps before the doors were opened in the morning and so absorbed were they in their work that they did not even move when the clock struck ten at night. Diplomatic examinations were being held in Paris and the headquarters library was doing its best to meet the unusual demand for material on international relations.

One of the best things done by the headquarters library is a phase of work it has done through other organizations. Thousands of soldiers are pouring into Paris for a few days' leave who know nothing about the city and have no time to visit the library. These soldiers are conducted about Paris by Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. guides but back of this work stands the American Library Association. There is scarcely an Army lecturer in Paris that has not obtained his material from the headquarters library and compiled his notes on the tables of its reference rooms. Day and night the rooms of the library are filled with these war workers and its shelves ransacked for material that can be put into a condensed form for soldiers staying in Paris for a limited time.

The reflection of our work has also been seen in the newspapers and magazines of America, for it is to the headquarters library that a large number of American writers in Paris have come for the historical background of their work.

Among the French librarians the headquarters library has stood for more than an Army organization. To them it has represented the library system of America. On Thanksgiving Day a meeting of

the French librarians was held at headquarters and since then many have returned to study the decimal classification and the system of cataloging, and to marvel at the free access to the shelves and the simple method of charging books.

The work is coming to an end. The soldiers are leaving France and when they are all out of Paris the work of the headquarters library will be finished. It has been unique in its service and, at times, unique in its methods. No fines have been asked for overdue books and no charge made for lost ones. The "honor system" has been used and it has worked well. Since the library opened last August its doors have never been closed for a whole day, except on that memorable first of May when all Paris was called to a halt and transportation ceased.

The American soldier considers the books lining the walls of the headquarters library as among his best friends in Paris and they have indeed proved to him an inspiration and help.

ELIZABETH GRAY POTTER.

THIRD ARMY HEADQUARTERS

The Army of Occupation moved to the Coblenz bridgehead in November and December, 1918. As originally constituted, the occupying force consisted of about Army about 125,000 men, and when moved 250,000 men. There are now in the Third Army now ordered are effected this number will be reduced to slightly over 100,000.

The area of Germany occupied by the Third Army is said to be one of the most densely populated sections of Europe. The rule against fraternizing has been observed rigidly; this is from the standpoint of the occupation; it prevents all social contact and reduces intercourse to the strict requirements of business. Generally, for example, German hotels and restaurants are closed against the men, and, with few exceptions, all forms of amusement.

It will be apparent that the need and the opportunity for library service is unique. Here are detachments of Americans isolated in small villages, cut off from normal association with people, very light duties and many hours of leisure every day and very little to employ that leisure. They are thrown entirely upon their own resources for recreation, or upon those of such organizations as ours. None of us has ever seen anything like the clamor for reading and study that has

been about us here. Men who have never read before have literally begged for books.

For the distribution of books we have coöperated with all the accredited welfare organizations, as well as with the army units themselves. Considerably more than half of our books have been distributed through the Y. M. C. A., K. C., and the Red Cross. The advantage of distributions through these agencies, particularly in the earlier days of the work, was that they afforded a personnel, largely women, who could be depended upon to be interested in book distribution, particularly of books of a recreational type. As a rule, however, there was the disadvantage that the libraries were located in canteens or huts where it was exceedingly difficult to safeguard the books, so that large percentages have been lost.

In our experience, the best library service is secured in those cases where military units ask directly for it. An appropriate room is almost invariably provided and competent men are detailed to administer the library. We have found service in such cases very satisfactory indeed; there is apt to be a large circulation, and the matter of returning books is largely a matter of military discipline.

Book distribution has been terribly hampered by the constant movement of troops. Not only have the divisions largely changed locations, but units within divisions are constantly shifting. It has been very hard in such cases to fix responsibility. One important town, which accommodates a regiment of troops, has had within the last three months no less than four different outfits. As these moved out some took their books with them; some left them, but before we had received notice of a change, the books were snapped up by another organization. We have outfitted this town three times, and at the present moment it is without a library.

It was felt from the first that there should be maintained at certain points libraries of sufficient size and diversity to accommodate men of widely varied tastes and education. This is hardly possible when the number of books is limited to a few cases sent to smaller units of soldiers, or to a hut or canteen.

The Coblenz library was the first important enterprise undertaken by the A. L. A. in the Third Army. It is located in the municipal festhalle, which was requisitioned by the Y. M. C. A. for the benefit of the whole Third Army, but especially the leave men. The library is

located in a large and attractive room on the main floor occupying one whole wing of the large building. It was redecorated for us, and good shelving was installed to accommodate about 6,000 volumes. It has been a great success from the beginning; the circulation has frequently run to 400 a day, and there are usually about 4,000 books in circulation. Since the beginning, between 8,000 and 10,000 volumes have been placed on the shelves. Much attention has been given to supplying the men with reference material, and we have co-operated with and supplemented the work of the several army schools operating in the area; but the chief value of the library has been as a circulation center.

Later, libraries were operated at Treves, Neuenahr, Neuwied, Andernach and Montabaur.

Early in March we opened at Coblenz a mail order section which follows closely the lines laid out by that at the Paris headquarters. No part of our work has been more successful than this. It has been of especial value in supplementing the scanty supply of books in the outlying field, and until the recent large withdrawals of troops was growing rapidly. Recently the work of this department has been greatly increased by supplying books requested by men in conferences with the lecturers of the Army Educational Corps.

We have been fortunate in maintaining the closest and most harmonious relations with the educational corps, both before it was incorporated into the army and since. In placing the educational reference libraries we have deferred to the wishes of the educational director; in consequence we have articulated perfectly with the educational scheme.

With the approval of the welfare officer for the Third Army we undertook the organization under military control of library systems in the several divisions. If, in the judgment of the division welfare officer, the service could best be rendered by one of the welfare organizations, that organization was to be recognized as the official library for that unit.

We have begun the distribution of magazines in accordance with the newly assumed duty of the A. L. A. In the present state of uncertainty, magazine service is on the whole the most effective service we are able to render and it is highly important that it be kept to a high standard of efficiency.

It has been a large responsibility to administer the library work in the Army of Occupation, but also an opportunity that any man would cherish.

EDWARD E. RUBY.

BREST

The "standing room only" sign is up tonight at Pontanezen Library, 3 miles out of Brest. Two hundred and three men, including about a dozen officers and four chaplains, are in the building at 8 P. M. Quiet reigns except for the shuffling of feet of those in transit. A pin dropping upon the rough floor would easily be heard. The fireplace has its triple row of chairs in addition to the settles, and each of the four stoves has its circle of friends. The men smoke, as do the stoves, and they wear their overseas caps, for the buildings here are drafty. The building is typical of libraries constructed in the camps in the States, except its walls and roofs are of corrugated iron, its windows of oiled cloth, its window frames and beams of unfinished lumber, its chairs made to order, its floors not fit for dancing as the cracks are many and wide and the boards of varying thicknesses, and its electric lighting poor, though said to be the best lighted place in camp. Some of the filing trays are made out of tin taken from the inside of tobacco cases, while the settles and the charging desk are constructed from the wood of the longer boxes of the A. L. A., those coming from Newport News. For a carpet within the desk there are two double blankets which are already showing the wear from constant use. The map of the battle front attracts men as molasses does flies and at times their arguments wax too warm, while many are grouped around a chart showing the colored symbols of the A. E. F.

The library has been in operation now a little over a month. Men were ready to enter before the carpenters were out, and there has been little or no need to advertise its existence. The use, except at meal hours, is a thriller to those not accustomed to crowds at home. The circulation in April, its first full month, totaled 19,189 volumes. When one appreciates that an inexperienced detail of seven men must handle the most of the routine work, one realizes that the system within must be simple, and it is.

The many camps around Brest have their libraries also, some in the Y. M. C. A. buildings, others in Red Cross huts, while in a number of cases the commanding officers give space and detail men to have charge.

At times transport librarians drop in, while others reach these shores and depart without our knowledge. Brest is a most interesting place, especially so from the many regiments which depart from the camp here. Many ships are in its

magnificent harbor at all times. There are war vessels from many countries, transports in the stream unloading U. S. troops from a lighter, German boats converted for the transport service, fishing smacks the masters of which are most picturesque. All these and the natural beauty of this quaint walled city give zest to the service.

HAROLD DOUGHERTY.

GIÈVRES

Gièvres is known to the A. E. F. as the G. I. S. D. of the S. O. S. Written out in full this spells "Warehouses," and indicates army supplies of all kinds in enormous quantities, handled by twenty thousand men in a camp large enough to include a hundred and fifty miles of American railway. To the A. L. A. also Gièvres meant a warehouse, but its early history as a distributing point belongs to the chronicles of the A. L. A. Headquarters. When my connection with it began late in February nearly all the books were out of the warehouse and some twenty thousand had been distributed through the area in the Y's, barracks, chaplains' reading-rooms and hospitals.

The particular need for more library service was due to the opening of the Army post schools. In answer to an urgent appeal from the post school officers at Gièvres and Pruniers fourteen sets of educational books and a librarian were delivered hastily in Gièvres. It was decided to establish a central library for the whole area, including the air service with its ten thousand additional men at Pruniers. The Army provided a building of the hospital barracks type, with living quarters in one end for the librarian and an assistant. While this building was being put up a sort of traveling service was maintained, the traveling being done by the books and the librarian in any sort of conveyance available at the moment, and headquarters were wherever books could be sorted or mail delivered.

The camp covered so large an area that no one building could ever serve the whole project, so the plan of sending out small sets of books was continued. Some went to companies doing guard duty or out in road gangs and remote from any kind of recreation, and others to places that had books but wished a new supply.

This camp is really a great business proposition and the men work in offices and warehouses all day and use the library much as they would at home, in the evening and Saturday afternoon and Sunday. It is not at all like the situation in

casual camps where the men have nothing more than a little drilling to take up their time. It is an advantage in giving us a more permanent set of readers but they are naturally fewer in numbers, and have much less time and inclination for reading or study. The greatest interest has been shown in reading that has some immediate bearing on business life. With the baseball season already open and so many rumors afloat about a speedy breaking up, very few can settle down to any line of cultural reading. Many boys have been in this one spot for twelve or fifteen months and as they take out one light story after another, they say quite frankly that all they want is something to help pass the time away.

LOUISE PROUTY.

ST. AIGNAN

At St. Aignan there is a constant changing of men, who may be here for a few days only, or held for several weeks. The district covers an area twenty or twenty-five miles square, with as many different groups or smaller camps as there are branches in the service. Sometimes there have been 80,000 men in the district, and at times 20,000.

At first transportation was the most serious handicap, not only in getting books to the camp but also in getting them distributed throughout the district. There are no trolley lines and a motor was almost impossible to get. After the signing of the armistice this was gradually changed and by the middle of March the Army could give all the transportation needed. The second handicap was the fact that men were casuals with none of the control and esprit de corps which goes with regular units. This was felt especially in the difficulty in getting the books returned—there was no officer who knew his men or had influence with them to help us out.

No camp needed library service more than St. Aignan. The very fact that the men were casuals and away from their units tended to make them discontented. The camp was horribly overcrowded with tired, uncomfortable, distressed men who had nothing to do but wait what seemed to them an interminable time for their start home. It was cold, wet, muddy, no heat in barracks and tents, little light at night. So the A. L. A. came into camp at a psychological moment, considering both the needs of the men and the help the Army could give, when Orlando C. Davis, the A. L. A. representative, arrived on January 10. He found the educational director of the Y. M. C. A. had already

placed some 14,900 volumes in forty-one places in the district. Some of these libraries had practically disappeared; all were much depleted. Mr. Davis got the Army to give and build a barrack building for a central library in the classification camp, the largest one in the district.

The building became so overcrowded the Army gave us a second barrack building within a month of the completion of the first, and this in spite of the fact that there were very heavy building demands made just at that time. This second building was joined to the first in such a way as to give us a room 40x100 feet. Within a week there was no seating space. At first an attempt was made to count the number of men using the library, but it was given up as hopeless. However on one especially busy day the men in the building were counted. There were 324 at the morning counting, 517 in the afternoon and 446 in the evening, making a total of 1,305 men in the building in one day as the minimum. There were not many days quite so busy but it was an ordinary occurrence to have every seat taken and for the men to stand and read.

There is absolutely no way of estimating the number of books read in the room, or the real circulation. Such is the effect of example, that even books seemed to go A. W. O. L., for clean-up days in the barracks brought many in with cards in them. Also many impromptu barracks libraries seem to have sprung up as the file of overdue grew at the desk. One report came in of nine books under one bed tick. But from the opening of the library on February 10 until April 30, the total recorded circulation was 25,821, of which 6,189 were classed books, and we had very few classed books worth anything until the educational sets came about the middle of March.

The demand for magazines was the hardest to meet. The Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A. both came to our rescue by giving us a number. At first we tried to keep them in the room but soon gave it up in disgust for they just melted away; so we substituted the plan of nailing down to the table one copy of each magazine and allowing the rest to circulate. The Red Cross also made the library a distributing station for the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*, *Chicago Tribune* and *Daily Mail*.

By April 1 our book supply—largely brought down from Paris by Army trucks—was adequate, and by May first eight sets of the educational books were in use in four places in the camp. Because of the nature of the camp almost no post

schools could be started excepting for illiterates. So the library has tried to fill the gap by giving the men a chance to read and study for themselves. The experience of one man may be interesting, especially as it shows the effort the men made to get back into harness again. He was delighted when he discovered law books and started to read. The third day he brought his book back discouraged, saying he simply could not keep his mind on it, so he stopped reading in "gobs," but took a hike first then read an hour, gradually increasing the time, until he could read a half day with ease.

To secure the return of the books has been a hard problem. The books seldom got out of the camp, as the Army saw that none went out as baggage; but with no reader's card there is no check on the reader, and a popular book goes around the barracks usually before it is returned. By that time there is no one responsible for its return and there it lies. Again the fact that we were casuals had to be considered. The books already placed in the camp had just disappeared in several places, and all libraries were having trouble. So it was decided not only to ask help of the Army but to appeal to the men individually. This was done by posters, by short talks at various recreational centers before large crowds and by appeals to the men themselves at the desk. A book slot was cut near the entrance, this making the return easy at any time of the day or night, and also often gave an excuse for making this appeal. In this way we gained the cooperation of many, who would voluntarily gather up the books lying around a barrack and bring them in. Also about once a month the Army would gather in all books.

The work of the central library was only a part of the service given. Books have been placed in Y. M. C. A., K. of C., prison and medical labor camps or any isolated companies or smaller groups. These groups have changed so constantly it is impossible to give the number served or what the circulation of these books has been. But a real traveling library system has been carried out. At first the old question of transportation made the work very difficult, but early in March the Army was able to give a Ford or truck as was needed, and at least two days per week was given to visiting these stations, taking out new books, collecting the used ones and delivering the books specially requested.

Another interesting and successful experiment was the placing of one of the Y Hut libraries and reading rooms in a

tent, thus separating it from the noise and confusion of the recreational center. The tent had windows which could be opened, double walls, a floor and was lighted by electricity. A well organized library of some 2,000 volumes and plenty of magazines, with reading tables, was opened on April 1. The room was a haven of quiet and peace, made most attractive with flowers and decorations that could be used in a tent.

The human side has been as interesting as the book side of the work, if there were only time to tell of it. But the A. L. A. may feel sure they have had the heartiest, fullest backing from the Army at this camp. Everything has been done to help on the work that it was possible to do, and the appreciation by the Army of the A. L. A. work is most encouraging. Also the hearty, helpful backing of the Y. M. C. A. has smoothed many hard places for the librarians, and contributed much to the success.

ANNA MACDONALD.

SAVENAY

Savenay is a quaint little village in Brittany—a village so small and unimportant that most people in France do not know that it exists. But there are thousands of returned soldiers in America today who can testify that there is such a town and that there is a big American hospital center there.

Just outside of the village is a large normal school built of stone and quite pretentious in its way. Before the coming of the Americans, all else was open country. The school was taken over by the medical department and turned into a hospital, which in the course of time became the central hospital of a group of eight scattered over the surrounding area. At present (May 1) there are in the entire center about 6,000 patients, 430 officers, 460 nurses and 3,250 enlisted personnel. Besides these there are perhaps 125 civilian employees.

Most of the patients are brief visitors, discharged from other hospitals and on their way to the port of embarkation. And the vast majority of them are well men whose one hope and ambition in life is to be called on the next convoy going to Brest or Saint Nazaire.

Up to the 1st of April all the books in the center were fiction, but with the opening of the educational department for the men of the medical detachment, a set of educational books was sent. Obviously the thing to do was to find a house for

them. Upon investigation, an empty ward which was being kept for a gymnasium was found; its location made it accessible to all hospitals. Upon request it was given to the American Library Association and upon further request it was furnished with tables, benches, shelves and a magazine rack by the engineers. As a very special concession it was all stained brown; and when some wicker chairs and yellow curtains and lamp shades were added, it was proclaimed by all, from the recreational colonel to the bucks en masse, to be the most attractive place in the center. Over here one misses the beautiful Red Cross houses and the attractive buildings of the other organizations. Everything is very rude and crude and in consequence any little attempt at decoration is quickly noticed and thoroughly appreciated.

The men are simply ravenous for books, the sick as well as the well ones. If the shelves were filled up every morning, each night would find them empty. The litter cases in the wards are visited in turn each day and an armful of books disappears almost as soon as it enters. When a sick man knows that he can get something besides fiction, his delight knows no bounds. It's the same old story of the camp hospitals in the States only more so, for when it's a question of getting something for a man who has lost an arm or a leg or an eye one would move heaven and earth to do it.

The officers have been as enthusiastic as the enlisted men about the kind of books they are getting. "After having been thoroughly fed up on sweets, it's good to be able to get this good bread and butter," one of them remarked. The nurses, too, drop in to read and take books but not as much as the officers.

Though these books are playing such a great part in the lives of these men in hospital, we must be glad that the days of the A. L. A. at Savenay are numbered. The center is to be evacuated by the middle of July and most of its patients will be where they long to be—safe once more on American soil.

ANNE M. MULHERON.

THE BEAUNE UNIVERSITY A. L. A. LIBRARY

From the hour that the library opened a rush started. Instructors who were without books of any sort were looking for the A. L. A. representative for help in preparing the first lectures. Students wanted books, books, books, either to get

an advance start in their studies or for general reading. So the first ten thousand books were rushed through the mill on a day and night shift, with the least possible delay, and put in circulation. The stream of readers became unbelievably great and greater. The reading room had a normal seating capacity of four hundred; but with the moving in of extra chairs this was increased to seven hundred, and then men packed in till there was not even standing room. In fact, it was utterly impossible to get to the shelves any time during the day or until the closing hour at ten o'clock.

From the first, two great problems presented themselves, books and room. The first was disposed of by the receipt of twenty sets of such educational titles as had arrived from the States, supplemented by several thousand miscellaneous books supplied from Paris stock, and by purchase in London. Mr. Kerr's trip to London resulted in the very prompt delivery of many books of the greatest possible value, and they were received at a time when most needed. The question of room was settled splendidly by the addition of two buildings to the main library.

There was a general demand, of course, for "departmental libraries." I am sure that at one time we had no less than twenty-five such requests. Since, however, most buildings were poorly lighted and heated, since they leaked, and office space was limited, and the library was almost unique in having both heat and light until late at night, most instructors were sufficiently reconciled to having books specially needed set aside in an "instructors' alcove." After the first week or two, with the immense popularity of the library in evidence, we asked if it would not be more advisable to provide special alcoves and reserves for the different colleges than to undertake to provide buildings, books and supervisors in several parts of the camp. The generous and quick response of the president in having erected quickly buildings which seated 1,500 readers brought about a happy solution, for it was soon evident that service could be given at these large buildings centrally located and under one administration.

Of the 30,000 volumes in the library, 2,600 are fiction; this number is adequate. The value of the collection lies in its splendid selection and in the fact that all the books are new and of the latest revisions. Readers generally, and especially army men, have been unsparing in their praise of the type of books unexpectedly found here.

I regard the extent and character of the reading done here as the happiest incident of my rather varied experiences in War Work. If it were not for actual records and observations it would be difficult for me to conceive of the amount of reading done.

There are, I suppose, about ten thousand men in this camp, possibly twelve thousand. At one time between nine and ten thousand books were in circulation, or approximately a book per man. At the very same time we were seating nine hundred readers in the library nearly every hour of the day, from 8 o'clock in the morning until 9:30 in the evening, mess hours alone excepted. At the present time we are seating from fourteen to fifteen hundred at a time. It is my observation that books drawn from the library are not ordinarily read in the library, except for the very frequent starting to read a book which is later taken out. Reading in the library is mainly of books men pick out while browsing about, and of course, in the two special reserve rooms. But to get a proper idea of the extent of reading, one must realize that practically every man has a book in his billet and that the majority of men in the camp read other books in the library every day.

Fiction is, very strange to say, the "slowest" book we have, and that in spite of the fact that it is all absolutely new, that it is a combination of the popular and standard titles such as have been popular in camps. It is popular, and has what would normally be regarded as an excellent circulation, but it falls down as compared with classed books. It ranks in circulation just about one to six.

Now, in my judgment, there are important reasons for this latter condition, and the main one is that the library is well stocked with brand new books of the type that men like, on open shelves where readers can handle them. I am not making an argument for open shelves—that matter is admittedly one of administration. The appeal of shelves of new books is very strong to men who have been roughing it for one or two years; these new books include practically every subject men might be interested in—all the businesses, professions, vocations, sports, history, politics, travel, fine literature, etc. Books on France were consistently popular; but drama, poetry, essays, with a surprisingly large call for appreciations of art and literature are well in the foreground. We must consider too the type of men here; there are eight or nine hundred officers, of course, men of education; and the average enlisted man here I sup-

pose has had some little college education, but if he has not, he is ambitious and a man of ideals. But this, which is the last observation, may be as accurate as the first, and it is based on personal contact with men at the desk, at mess, on the street, and in a thousand and one other places. When men arrived at the University, they felt they were getting back more nearly to old peace time conditions; military restrictions were far less than at any time in a year or so, and they had a certain mental "spring" which accompanies a feeling of freedom. Very many men have talked of wanting to "read up" on the most general subjects, and time without number grab books which we commonly associate with "high-brows." But one after another, too, they wanted, along with these, books on business theory and practice in order "to save time." I have been particularly struck with their responsiveness to what they read.

It is very difficult for me to give you a fitting appreciation of the courtesies extended by the military authorities. I can think of nothing that staff officers might have done for the library or librarians that has not been done; on the contrary, they have anticipated our needs in many instances. They have been so generous in the little acts of assistance and courtesy which so frequently are forgotten in civil life, that we are embarrassed by our inability to reciprocate.

L. L. DICKERSON.

AMERICAN PEACE COMMISSION LIBRARY

In order to understand the work that the American Library Association War Service has done for the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, it is necessary to sketch the library activities of the American Peace Commission. The Research section of the Peace Commission existed under the name of the "Inquiry" for over a year before the Peace Commission proper was organized. As the aim of the Research section was to make an exhaustive study of all "problem areas" in connection with the war from a geographic, historic, ethnographic, economic and political point of view, it was necessary that the research workers have access to a large number of books. As it was impossible to actually assemble in one place all books necessary for this work, the library was made up of a small working collection, and the workers depended on the various big libraries for their research material. A selected bibliography

was made on all subjects of research and the location of the books in different libraries was indicated. These books were borrowed when needed and later this list was used as a basis for selection. When the Peace Commission was organized these books were borrowed from various libraries to form the library to be used in Paris.

Most of the recent books and many of the older books published in European countries were not accessible in the United States, and it was the work of the book order department of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, as organized by the American Library Association in Paris, to round out this collection on "International relations" from the book market of Europe.

It was agreed between the Library of Congress, the A. L. A. and the Peace Commission that:

1. The Library of Congress should buy through the American Library Association in Paris all books needed by the Peace Commission. These books to be considered as a loan from the Library of Congress.

2. To send over for this work one person who was familiar with the procedure of the Peace Commission (the State Department had ruled that no woman should be on the staff of the Peace Commission, therefore, when the "Inquiry" was merged with the State Department the library staff, composed entirely of women, did not go with the library).

3. To locate in European libraries books not on the market.

The American Peace Commission asked that the A. L. A. take complete charge of their book order and accessions department, the work of the department falling into the following groups: Book ordering and accessioning, book selection, and locating books in libraries.

THE EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

The work of the educational department has included various divisions, which are represented seriatim:

Educational libraries.—Usually an "A. L. A. educational library" was the nucleus for the work of a post or division school. Many of these schools did not begin their work until the arrival of the A. L. A. books enabled the instructors to make lesson outlines, the supply of army textbooks being very tardy and incomplete. Three hundred and forty-one sets, each of about 400 volumes of educational books, have been placed in approximately 200 points.

The selection of titles in the educational

libraries has elicited many expressions of praise from army men and officers and instructors. The most apparent oversights or underestimates of material needed were in the fields of public health, applied biology (including medicine), law, drama, philosophy and ethics, and some of the trades. Most of these were remedied by special purchases.

The distribution of the educational libraries would have been hastened and the field more completely covered by assembling them in New York. Moreover, it is now the opinion of this department that no orders should have been allowed to be placed in England, except for instant delivery, as the delays in reprinting and binding have resulted in delivery of many titles too late for use. Further, the result would have been more satisfactory if there had been no "limited" titles; uniform sets of perhaps 500 volumes would have answered the requirements. A few special titles could have been supplied to the A. L. A. central libraries. These opinions are set down in no sense as criticism or as apology; only as a guide to possible future efforts of this sort.

The educational libraries were used rather generally as circulating sets, but sometimes as reference collections. The more satisfactory plan seems to have been a combination of reference and circulation, books in use for special class work being reserved, the others circulating. Some of the divisional school officers, and occasionally our own representatives, split up the sets according to varying interests of post schools and billeting centers. There is general testimony that the presence of the educational libraries, in whole or in part, had an appreciable educational and cultural effect, independent of any instruction. In fact, at Le Mans the interest aroused by the educational sets is said to have impelled the enrollment of many men in the educational classes.

Special educational collections.—Such collections to the number of 265 were assembled and dispatched each to fill specific needs. Many of these were made up to meet the pressing textbook needs of school officers and instructors.

The A. E. F. University library.—This library at Beaune is a distinct achievement for the A. L. A. War Service and the staff at Beaune. The educational department coöperated only to the extent of selecting and purchasing in the London book market some five thousand volumes, plus confident backing of the recommendations of the staff.

It seems appropriate in this report to remark that it is shown to be possible to

conserve the study and cultural and recreational interests of students and at the same time to coöperate satisfactorily with the specialized departmental and research demands of the teaching personnel. Departmental decentralization of the library was avoided at Beaune by providing adequate service at the main library; while the book selection, administrative methods, and the general live atmosphere of this main library rounded out its effectiveness.

The A. E. F. school detachments.—Fourteen French and British universities were furnished the regular educational libraries, supplemented by special collections of medical and law books.

The architectural library for the A. E. F. art instruction center at Bellevue, near Paris.—This project was taken over by the Library War Service after the selection of material had been nearly completed by the Army Education Commission of the Y. M. C. A., the order being assumed by the A. L. A. and general material being added. This collection of valuable architectural plates has served about 200 men, administered by an officer detailed as librarian.

Coöperation with the hospital section of the Army Education Commission, fine arts department.—This has involved the furnishing of 401 volumes on art and handiwork subjects, suitable for use by convalescent hospital patients in reading or art work. This work has been carried on with great effectiveness in thirteen hospitals by the staff of the fine arts department. The chief of the hospital section has expressed his appreciation of the prompt and effective A. L. A. service, without red tape and exceeding his expectations in range and value of material furnished.

Coöperation with the A. E. F. debating league.—This league was organized by the lecture department of the Y. M. C. A. The representatives of the A. E. F. school detachments in some eight of the French universities conducted a series of debates. Material was dispatched to each team.

Order department.—The selection, ordering, and distribution of additional book material for the mail department and the central libraries, the receiving and checking and distribution of new material received by post from United States and England, and the attempt to find quickly hundreds of special items needed for the demands of the A. E. F., has required a good portion of the time of this department.

This department ventures to record its high appreciation of the prompt and accurate service of the order department at Washington, of the American dispatch of-

fices, and particularly of the untiring and painstaking efficiency of the Paris warehouse department.

The work has furnished frequent occasions for advice to soldiers, officers, welfare workers, civilians, and other organizations regarding the purchase of books

and maps and the use of libraries at home. This department has a distinct conviction that in the future much more than in the past the average man will call upon organized libraries for book advice and book service, and that the scholar and regular reader will more than ever recognize the practical efficiency of libraries.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES*

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF FIVE ON LIBRARY SERVICE

The first thing to do when one is about to undertake anything, is to ascertain as many as possible of the facts bearing on the undertaking. This would seem axiomatic; yet it is remarkable how little attention has been paid to it until very recently. We may recall the classic story of the Royal Society and King Charles II, who is said to have propounded the question: "Why is it, when a fish is placed in a pail of water, that the weight is not increased?" Various learned replies were given, until one academician, more curious than the rest, tried the experiment and found that the weight was increased by the exact weight of the fish. Anyone who should nowadays prepare to grapple with any scientific, industrial or military problem without being certain of his facts, would be condemned at the outset.

Yet librarians have not at their disposal complete facts regarding their own work, its methods, its administration and its results. We have a great body of statistics, yet despite our A. L. A. rules they are not yet accurately comparable, nor are they always selected intelligently and with some definite purpose in view; and the great body of data relating to our work is not capable of being thrown into statistical form. Anyone therefore who now talks about library work as a nation-wide, inter-connected body of effort, who tries to evaluate it and to make recommendations for its extension and improvement, is doing so without knowing his facts, for they have not been completely ascertained, classified, and arranged.

It is this fundamental work, as your committee understands it, that it has been constituted to do. The present is a particularly good time to do it. American libraries have united during the war as never before in doing something worth while. Over and above the products and results of this united effort, of which we are properly proud, are the outstanding facts of the union and of the effort themselves; of the spirit that gave rise to them and that, in turn, they have fostered; of the peculiar abilities, methods and ways of regarding things that have inevitably attached themselves to the work and to those who have been doing it, whether individuals or organizations. The material results of the work may vanish with the demobilization, but these other things will not, if we have the desire to keep them alive.

The general feeling that there is to be a new order of things as the result of the war seems based largely on a vague idea that no great cataclysm can fail to leave its impress on the world. The form that such impress may take, however, is doubtless dependent upon our own reaction to the forces that have been let loose and to the movements set up by them. The American public library will be a new and a more vital thing only if we are prepared to make it so. There is a to-and-fro swing all about us; if we can only run in and push when the oscillation is with us, we may do wonders; delay may mean that the movement may return upon us and overthrow us.

This preliminary report must necessarily be confined to a statement of organization and the general layout of the work.

In reporting on this we have proceeded

*For other committee reports see *Bulletin*, May, 1919.